

Appendix: Blackledge Miscellany

The main body of this book, "*Blackledges in America*," has provided a genealogical study of the descendants of primary progenitors of the Blackleach/Blackledge/Blacklidge families. However, as with any such study, there are always fascinating side stories that show up along the way. This Appendix presents material related to but a handful of such stories.



The first entry is a transcription taken from the diary of Benjamin Franklin BLACKLEDGE [5:478]. Shirley Rieben has evidence that a descendant in MT may possess the original diary today, but the transcription of about nine typed pages can be obtained from several individuals, including Leland Blackledge. Martha Herreid noted at the conclusion of the transcription, "*In 1961, when these items were taken from the Diary, the ink was very dim and in many instances could not be seen at all. Notice the different 'tenses' in his writing. Wonder how many of us to-day would even dream of starting out afoot like B. F. did.*"

Taken from the Diary of

Benjamin Franklin Blackledge

Wednesday, January 20, 1869: "The 19th birthday of B. F. Blackledge."

March 2, 1869: "Working in the woods making rails. Spring is coming and with it (for the farmer) work. Our fences are to be mended, get ready for sowing grain and making calculations which will regulate our operations during the remainder of the summer. We should make our plans with judgment."

March 3, 1869: "I agreed to work for P. Davis commencing the 1st day of April, until harvest. Price, \$20 per month."

March 22, 1869: "Worked and helped to clean the brush off the place where the M. E. Church is to be located."

April 1, 1869: "Commenced working for P. Davis. One year ago today I was working for David Mattchets and it was quite wintry and cold. Today it resembles, in some respects. Then I was harrowing in wheat. Today it snowed and froze. Now I wonder what I will be doing this time next year, but what is the use of speculating on this. No one can tell and it is a great blessing, too."

April 16, 1869: "This is Friday morning and a dreary one too. It is raining but we need rain to fetch up the wheat and start the crops. I have commenced reading the History of England."

Saturday, August 16, 1869: "This was a day long to be remembered. We have looked forward to this day with the anticipation of seeing something wonderful and we can truly say we have a total eclipse of the sun. It was visible at 4 o'clock P.M. The sun was touched on the northwest portion. Now with a smoked piece of glass in hand we were intently gazing at the wonderful phenomenon of nature. 15 minutes after 4 things begin to look gloomy. The sun looks now like a new moon. 25 minutes after 4, everything wears a dazzling greenish aspect. The fowls seem to notice the change in nature. They go moping around as if they were lost. We can look now at the sun without dazzling our eyes. 45 minutes after 4 - it begins to look very dark. Nature seems to be shrouded in the gloom of death. I will have to quit - can not see longer to write. The chickens go to roost. The stars appear. How strange it appears. There seems to be a very dark cloud rising in the northwest to increase the grandeur. The dew falls. There seems to be a light spot in the moon. The dark cloud in the western horizon suddenly breaks away. It was total about three minutes, when all at once the sun breaks out and the light which we were deprived of, comes back again. 25 minutes after 5 - things begin to look natural. It was visible, I believe, about 2 hours."

October 18, 1870: "Today I took my first trip to the barn for 4 weeks. I am just recovering from typhoid fever. It seems good to get out in the fresh air after 4 weeks close confinement, yet I am thankful, I trust, that I am able to get out at all. Things look quite changed. Winter is fast approaching. Last nite, Jack took up his cold form and blowed his icy breath quite freely. It froze ice pretty hard."

October 29, 1870: "This morning we are making preparations to take a trip to Uncle Joseph Blackledges. They live about 18 miles from here in the County of Powahick. Emily and Martha, my cousins, were to be married on the next day (Sunday) so we were anxious to be there. I had yet never seen any of them since we were small, some 12 years ago, and if I failed to get there I should miss getting to see the girls for their men do not live in Iowa. Mr. Coe, Martha's man, lives in Indiana and Mr. Pickering, Emily's man, in Illinois. The morning was not very fair. Some indications of rain. We started 15 minutes past 12 and traveled about 5 or 6 miles when it commenced to rain. Slow at first but increasing as we went and finally poured down. I had not recovered from the fever yet. Owen seems quite sick. Father and mother neither enjoying good health, all getting drenched in the rain for some 12 miles. We got to our destination at dusk, cold, wet and hungry. Found them busily preparing for the wedding which was to take place the next day. We were soon warmed, our appetites appeased and enjoying ourselves in general."

October 30, 1870: "Found us all alive. Now begins work for the women. Turkeys to roast, etc., etc. Sunday was no day of rest on this occasion for them. Some after the appointed time (which was 3 o'clock) they were married and supper was announced and the groaning table was soon relieved of a portion of its contents. So the day passed. The rain subsided in the morning but is cold."

Monday morning dawned with good prospects for a more pleasant trip home than the one here. We got home in the afternoon, some worse for the wear. Owen is quite sick, mother has a cold, father, the headache. Found Lindley sick but we are at home, thank fortune. Weather still nice."

November 27, 1870: "Today mother is 40 years old."

December 17, 1870: "The winter is passing away and time brings us nearer the grave. We shudder if our all is in the world but if we have an interest in heaven the nearer the grave the nearer to everlasting peace."

Christmas – December 25, 1870: "Christmas once more steals upon us and finds us on this side of the grave and eternity. One more year has gone forever. Yes, forever. What a solemn thought! One year nearer the grave from whence no traveler ever returns. Let us ask ourselves one question – What have we been doing, what are we doing, what have we yet to do to meet the change that awaits us all."

January 20, 1871: "Today I am 21 years old. The long looked-for event. I now find myself to be free but yet I see but little difference. I will be held accountable for doing or not doing. I hope I will ever be guided by good principles. I believe I will lay down a few rules.

1st. Pay as we go or not go at all.

Exceptions—never ask for credit without you know at least two changes where you can meet your obligations."

March 14, 1871: "The Peddlers Adventure No. One. Here I am staying or going to stay with Mr. Rawlins. I have not sold any books yet. Have not tried only two places. I will try tomorrow if nothing happens."

March 15, 1871: "Here I am setting on a bridge at one o'clock without anything to eat, without a single name. People seem to be very poor."

March 16, 1871: "Here I am sitting by a straw pile on our old place. I have just been to the house. There seems to be something sacred about the place of my boyhood days. I have sold one book . . . I did not find any dinner until I get my supper which was after dark. I went home and concluded that peddling was not my fortune."

Thursday, June 15, 1871: "This morning Uncle Josephs folks were on hand for Nebraska. I was all ready. The farewell words were soon spoken and we were on our road. We fared first rate until we came to North River. There we were greeted with a very hard storm, almost a hurricane. I took shelter on or under a covered bridge. Three trees blew down close to our wagons but we came out all right. Some movers above us had a tree to fall on their wagon and broke it."

Oct. 11, 1873: "B. F. Blackledge and Atlantic Gray—N. M. Scott and Jennie Lewis—Amos Register and Hannah Lewis were married at Lorenzo Lewis' by Joel Burtzel. We took dinner the next day at N. M. Scott's mothers. We lived at C. A. Coe's until we got out house fixed or the one we rented. About this time we went to Spaulding Co., Ohio [or is it Paulding] hunting for deer but we did not get to kill any. I saw some 5 or 6. During the winter, I did not do very much. The next spring I worked for Chris for a while then he was going to Nebraska so I bought his goods and concluded to run things myself. About the 1st of April I bought Geo Kimble out and moved forthwith to a home of our own—when we get it paid for—Agreed to pay \$400."

Sept. 7, 1874: "This morning I am in the store. Lant is sick with the billious fever, Dr. Waldron is tending upon her. Mary Elma Haines, Lant's sister, is with her. I forgot to say that we joined the Grange in the spring of '74. The society is quite numerous and I believe doing good. Politically the country is divided up—Republican, Democrat and Independent. I am perplexed as to the termination of politics, but am not much of a politician, but surely we need reform in our Gov. Officials are plunging the laboring classes into debt.



The second entry is a transcription from the 1883 diary of Harvey BLACKLEDGE [4:533], one of four possessed by his granddaughter, Florine Elizabeth Hunt [4:1891]. She writes that *"this covers the year when he was seventeen, usually begins with a daily weather report, and records activities, visitors and those he and his family visit. His grandfather, John Blackledge, had settled in Rush County, Indiana in 1823 on land his father, Jacob, had entered when the Indiana Territory first opened to settlers of European background. The Blackledge tribe flourished in Rush County, and the farms that surrounded Harvey's father's farm teemed with cousins, aunts and uncles. The Blackledges married the Hinchmans, the Daubenspecks, and the Buells, often sisters marrying brothers so there were dozens of 'double cousins.' If you weren't kin, you were neighbors and friends, and those alliances lasted down through my mother's life, though she had moved away from Indiana while still a child."*

The transcription strives to preserve Harvey's grammar, spelling, punctuation and capitalization.

Taken from the 1883 Diary of

Harvey Blackledge

Thursday, January 4, 1883 "was a tarble bad day it snowed hard all day about. We went to school I had lots of fun. There was some company at school george irvin finished moving out."

Tuesday 9 "was a fine day we went to school I had lots of fun. Father and Jerry built a hog house. There was a fruit tree agent here."

Saturday, January 13, 1883 "was a tarble bad day it snowed all day. In the morning we moved the sheep I took the dogs and caught two rabbits. Then we took the cattle back on the back place elmer got some wood."

Sunday 14 "was a beautiful day. Father and mother went to church. I skirt up two rabbits in the afternoon I went to the creek and skated."

Friday 9 [February] "was a fine day. we went to school I had lots of fun. We quit school. elmer hauled manure father shucked corn in the barn"

Saturday 10 " was a tarble bad snowy day. Frank Buell came up and went to uncle Jakes sugar camp. Father and mother went to town fan and sallie went to aunt charlottes."

Wednesday, February 21, 1883 "was a very nice day. we went to school I had lots of fun. At night the girls and me went to Jess. Blacklidges wedding [to Herschell E. Daubenspeck]

Friday 6 [April] "was a bad rainy day. In the morning I fed the things. Then I went over about links old house with charley. As I came back through our woods he started a fox out of a hollow tree he caught it several times but it whipped him every time and got away."

Thursday 26 "was a very nice day I plowed all day father plowed back of the old barn. Elmer grubbed stumps. There was a stove polish agent here."

Friday 11 *[May]* "was a nice day. we finished planting the 30 acre field then I harrowed. At night the girls and me went to a entertainment. aunt sarahann and dora was here."

Thursday May 31 "was a nice day. In the morning I went after some amunition. Then we all went to nans eva Arnold went with us. Elmer chopped wood I killed three crows at two shots."

Friday, June 1 "was a hot day. In the forenoon father and me went to town. I got a new suit of clothes I took my fox scalps I got \$8.00 for them. In the afternoon elmer and me plowed corn at night I took the girls to a festival."

Thursday 7 "was a hot day. I went to uncle alfs frank and me went hunting I killed four squirrels at night the girls and me went to commencement"

Monday June 18, 1883 "was a hot day. It rained some father and me went to mill. We bought a new buggy. Uncle John Hinchman and a map peddler was here."

Thursday, July 12, 1883 "was a hot day. It rained at noon elmer and me plowed all day. Nan and Mrs. Applegate was here. There was a book agent here."

Sunday 29 "was a cool day. in the morning we all went to church in the afternoon I went to uncle clints Amos and me went to Sunday school father and mother went to nans."

Friday 10 *[August]* "was a hot day. father and me worked in the fish pond all day. elmer and Jerry helped in the afternoon. There was an insurance agent here."

Friday 24 "was a nice day. in the forenoon father and I went to glenwood after brann. Mr. And Mrs. Smith from Indianapolis and aunt America was here. Eme buell and Mate elliot was here for supper in the afternoon elmer and me worked on the fish pond."

Saturday 8 *[September]* "was a cool day. in the forenoon I went to town after a load of seed wheat. in the afternoon they all went to town but me I hauled school house wood. Jerry corded it up."

Sunday 9 "was a cold day. in the forenoon we all went to church. India Blacklidge and sue calkey was here while we was out nan and oscar was home. In the evening mother and father went to uncle eds."

Tuesday 11 "was a nice day. in the morning I finished sowing wheat. Father sowed timothy seed. Elmer and me made cider the rest of the day. father went to town and to the fair in the afternoon."

Wednesday, September 19, 1883 "was a hot day. fan and me went to school. lieu and harve Mauzy was here all day. elmer made some cider and picked some beans. uncle ed sowed wheat."

Tuesday 2 *[October]* "was a rainy day. fan nan oscar and me went to Cincinnati"

Wednesday, November 21, 1883 "was a tarble rainy day. fan and me went to school. The crick was so hie that amos and India staid allnight at our house. Sallie went to uncle alfs and staid all night."

"Memoranda" "1883 taken all through was a year that will long be remembered by me. In the spring in March some time I quit school and went to work on the farm. We hired Elmer Watson in the winter who worked for us until after harvest when he quit and moved to mart hinchmans to work for him."

The third entry in this Appendix is about the professional magician in the William line, J. Elder BLACKLEDGE [5:1050]. One of the compilers of this book, David W. Blackledge, recalls taking his son to see the magician Blackstone in Oklahoma City. When Dave's son asked for an autograph, Blackstone asked if they were related to the famous magician J. Elder Blackledge. This entry gives the entire text of the testimonial article by the editor of GENII magazine in 1948, along with the image of the cover for that issue.

J. Elder Blackledge, Magician

This internationally famous magician was featured on the February 1948 cover of GENII Magazine (Vol. 12, No. 6, Los Angeles, CA) with the following article written by the editor:

J. Elder Blackledge, The Man

Born in Indianapolis in 1891, Mr. Blackledge attended the Chestnut Hill Academy in Philadelphia and then received his Bachelor of Science degree in architecture at the University of Pennsylvania. He served in World War I as Battalion Radio Officer in the 138th Field Artillery, A.E.F. in France. Following his honorable discharge from the army, Mr. Blackledge practiced architecture in Indianapolis until 1924, meanwhile continuing his studies of magic, magicians and their history. For thirty years he has extended his research throughout the world, studying and performing in 22 countries.

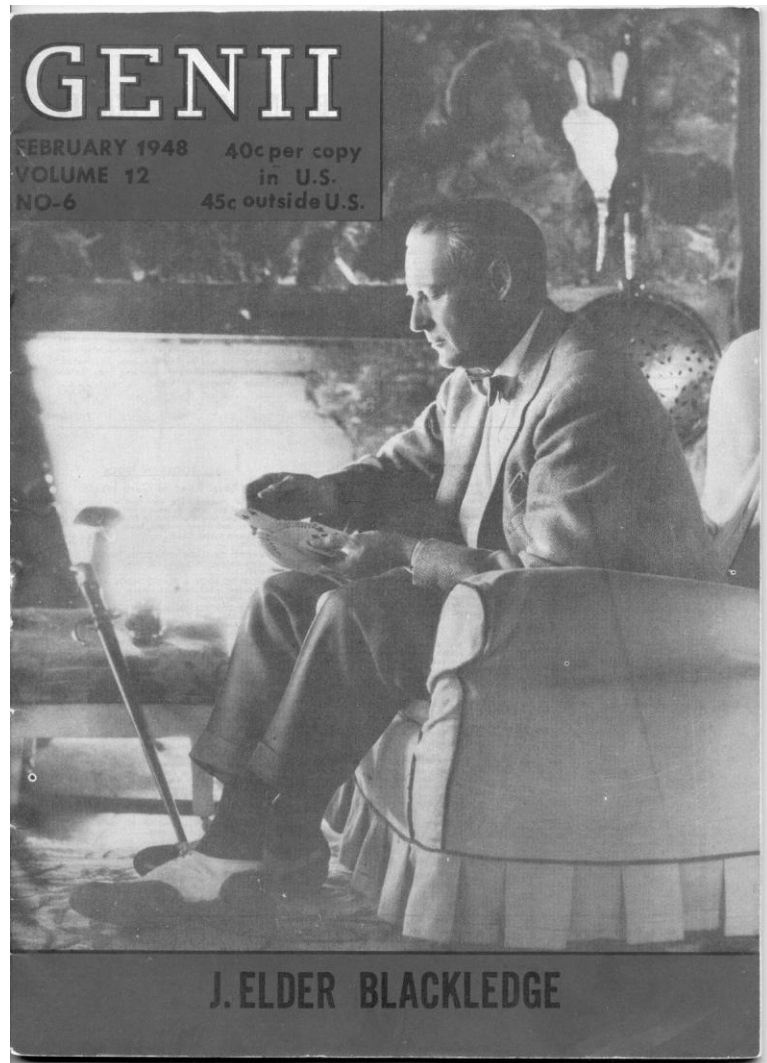
J. Elder Blackledge combines the most striking arts of scholar and conjurer in his presentation of magic. He has developed an extensive library of magical lore, on which he draws for the stage and microphone lectures which have won him international fame.

Mr. Blackledge compliments (sic) his story of magic with actual demonstrations of legerdemain past and present. His charm and ease in creating incredible effects make him an ideal entertainer for the sophisticated audience.

I have had the personal pleasure of knowing our cover subject for approximately ten years. Modest to the extreme, he has permitted himself to be all too little publicized. As a magician, and particularly in the lecture field, his place is with the greatest of all time.

Mr. Blackledge's services are constantly sought by society's four hundred and that he long has been a favorite at the White House, in Washington, D.C., is a fact well known.

Mr. Blackledge specializes in

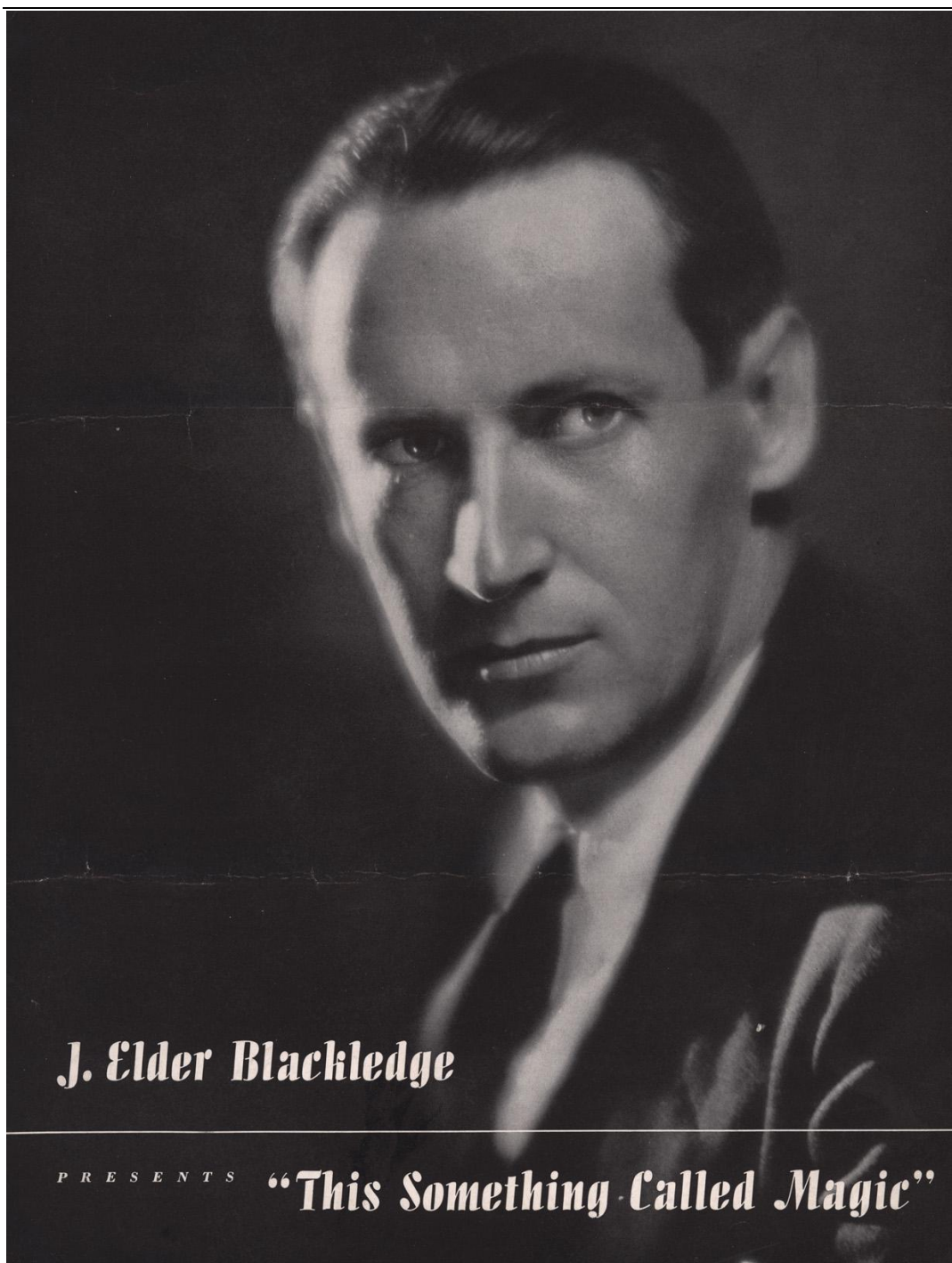


conjuring which requires little apparatus. His most sensational features can be easily carried in a brief case. To me, Mr. Blackledge is a cultured, college educated, suave, but equably personable Max Malini.

In closing, I am going to quote from the word of my friend Bim Pond when the latter said in Program Magazine: "J. Elder Blackledge is as polished a gentleman as has ever graced a drawing room."

Source

GENII Magazine, February 1948. Vol. 12, No. 6, Los Angeles, CA.



The fourth entry is for Ron BLACKLEDGE [5:5349], also a descendant within Chapter 5 and usually known as the father of Todd Blackledge [5:6739] of National Football League and CBS Sportscaster fame. Ron was an excellent athlete in his own right, as evidenced by this Stark Co, OH, sports article.

Ron Blackledge and Todd Blackledge

Football gave Blackledge a vehicle for life's lessons

By JOE FROLLO JR. Repository assistant sports editor

This is the second in a series of stories profiling the inaugural class of 15 of the Stark County High School Football Hall of Fame.

It has been 45 years since he last suited up for Timken High School, but many still say Ron Blackledge is the best athlete who ever wore the Trojan blue.

Known by younger generations as an NFL assistant coach and the father of quarterback Todd Blackledge, a first-round draft pick by the Kansas City Chiefs, Ron Blackledge built his legacy through hard work and determination.

He grew up in a home described as “dirt-floored,” never playing organized sports until high school, one of the least likely to one day be inducted into the Stark County High School Football Hall of Fame.

Instead of honing his skills in junior high, Blackledge delivered papers in the afternoon and worked at a bowling alley in the evening. If some daylight remained when his chores were done, he joined the neighborhood pickup games.

He never knew what was coming his freshman year.

“I grew up in a tough situation, but then I got the father figures I needed from coaches. They took me in ... said I could play,” Blackledge said. “I didn’t know at the time if I could play sports. But (football coach) Dan Risaliti, (basketball coach) Kenny Kate and (assistant) Freddy Harold, between those three, convinced me to try athletics.”

Blackledge collected nine letters, three each in football, basketball and baseball. He was first-team All-Ohio in basketball and baseball and second-team in football, earning his school’s top athlete award his senior year (1955-56).

He played offensive end and defensive back for the football team, helping the Trojans to a 12-4-1 record his final two seasons. His three interceptions against Ashtabula in 1954 remain a school record. His 76-yard punt return for a touchdown against Lincoln in 1955 stood for more than 30 years as the longest in school history.



Harold remembers Blackledge as a shy kid who found himself on the athletic fields.

“For a kid his size, he demanded attention,” Harold said of Blackledge, a solid but not bulky 6-feet tall during his playing days. “He was quiet almost to a fault. He may have been the best all-around athlete ever to come out of Timken. And I was there for 39 years.”

While looking at colleges, Blackledge visited a few Big Ten schools as well as Syracuse, but he settled on Bowling Green. The Falcon coaches, like their predecessors at Timken, made him feel wanted.

“I had the benefit of playing for great coaches throughout growing up,” Blackledge said. “I had a couple of other options, but I wasn’t much of a student. I worked hard, and I tried hard. (Bowling Green) turned out to be a great move.”

Blackledge was named Mid-American Conference first team as an end his senior year. He also earned All-MAC honors as a third baseman and soon after graduation was inducted into the school’s Hall of Fame.

While helping the Falcons go unbeaten his senior year, a season that ended with BG named the NCAA small-school national champion, Blackledge knew what he wanted to do.

He was returning to Stark County to coach.

Don Nehlen gave Blackledge his first job, teaching offensive-line techniques at Canton South. A young Blackledge was the position coach for fellow inductee Dick Himes.

Three years later, at age 25, Blackledge took over the Timken program.

“I can’t even say what the Timken athletic program meant for me. To be able to come back and try to pass that on was an honor,” Blackledge said.

The stay was short. Three disappointing seasons at Timken left him with a 7-22 record.

His coaching talent was evident, though, as Blackledge soon began a college coaching career that included stops at Cincinnati, Kentucky and Princeton. Then, at age 39, Kent State gave him his first head coaching opportunity.

Blackledge’s reputation grew. Five years later he was hired to tutor the Pittsburgh Steelers’ offensive line. From 1982-91, he helped form the front five that opened holes for Franco Harris and Merrill Hoge. Blackledge finished his coaching career in Indianapolis from 1992-97, molding the line that helped Marshall Faulk succeed.

While Blackledge’s professional coaching was picking up speed, his son, Todd, was coming of age in football.

Todd Blackledge, part of the NFL’s quarterback class of 1983, played pro ball for seven years. Even with that resume, Todd often gets the back seat when compared to his father.

“When I talk to people, there are a lot of people who say, ‘You were good, but dad was better,’ ” Todd said. “I’ve seen clippings and talked to people. He played with tremendous passion. He wasn’t the fastest guy. He wasn’t the biggest guy. Yet he achieved some tremendous things by wanting it more.

“He played it the way it was supposed to be played.”

Todd grew up in a world where sports and the lessons his father learned were at the center of everything. Todd was taught to play hard but fair — to respect coaches and take every opportunity to learn.

“My dad never forced me to play sports, but he was always there to help when I was,” Todd said. “Whether we would play catch, practice how to rebound, whatever, he would mix fundamentals and the proper way of doing things.”

Ron also instilled a love for Stark County in his son. When Todd’s NFL career was over, like his father, he came home.

“We remain pretty close. We see each other a lot,” said Todd, a college football analyst for CBS. “It’s obvious much of my knowledge comes from him. He’ll be watching a game I’m doing with my wife or my mom, and he’ll say something about a play. Then, I’ll say it on TV a few seconds later. We look at the game the same way.”

Knowing some of him rubbed off on his son and former players makes Ron Blackledge proud. It is what Risaliti, Kate and Harold taught him. It is all he has ever wanted to do.

“Those coaches gave me everything, and my whole life has been credited to Timken High School,” Blackledge said. “It is an honor and privilege to play sports, not a right. I hope I helped prove you can do anything if you try hard enough.”

Source

Joe Frollo Jr., Assistant Sports Editor, *The Repository*, Canton, OH. Reprinted with permission of the author as provided on 7 June 2002 by e-mail. Contact at (330) 580-8564 or e-mail: joe.frollo@cantonrep.com

